

Message Text

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P 221116Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 244

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SOFIA 2059

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (INGERSOLL, ROBERT S.), PFOR, BU

SUBJECT: DEPUTY SECRETARY'S CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT ZHIVKOV

1. FOLLOWING TELEGRAM, REPORTING MAIN POINTS OF DEPUTY SECRETARY INGERSOLL'S SEPTEMBER 18 CONVERSATION BULGARIAN PRESIDENT ZHIVKOV, HAS BEEN APPROVED BY DEPUTY SECRETARY. MEMCONS REPORTING DEPUTY SECRETARY'S CONVERSATIONS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER MLADENOV, VICE PREMIER DOYNOV, AND CHAIRMAN ZHIVKOVA OF COMMITTEE FOR ART & CULTURE ARE BEING POUCHES S/S, AS IS FULLER VERSION OF THIS CONVERSATION WITH ZHIVKOV. DEPT PLEASE MAKE LATERAL DISTRIBUTION FOR THIS TELEGRAM AND MEMCONS.

2. PARTICIPANTS IN SEPTEMBER 18 MEETING. ON BULGARIAN SIDE: TODOR ZHIVKOV, PRESIDENT, COUNCIL OF STATE, PEOPLES REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA; PETUR MLADENOV, FOREIGN MINISTER; LYUBOMIR POPOV, BULGARIAN AMBASSADOR TO US. ON US SIDE: ROBERT S. INGERSOLL, DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE; AMBASSADOR MARTIN F. HERZ.

3. BEGIN SUMMARY. PRESIDENT ZHIVKOV RECEIVED DEPUTY SECRETARY SEPT 18 FOR A WIDE-RANGING DISCUSSION IN WHICH HE SHOWED HIMSELF AS USUAL EBULLIENT, SELF-CONFIDENT, EARTHY AND DIRECT. HE ALSO DISPLAYED A CONCILIATORY ATTITUDE TOWARD THE US AND GAVE EVIDENCE OF DESIRING CONFIDENTIAL
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ACROSS-THE-BOARD IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONS. HE EMPHASIZED BULGARIA'S INTEREST IN ACQUIRING AMERICAN TECHNOLOGY ESPECIALLY IN CONNECTION WITH ITS AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT.

ZHIVKOV SAID HE WOULD "EVEN NOW" SEE TO IT THAT MEDIA ARE CURBED IN ANY EXCESSIVE CRITICISMS OF THE U.S. HE CONCEDED NOTHING WITH RESPECT TO BULGARIA'S IDEOLOGICAL ORIENTATION (HE MADE ONLY SOME PASSING REMARKS ON ITS FOREIGN POLICY ORIENTATION) BUT SPOKE WARMLY OF THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND SEEMED WILLING TO SETTLE THE ISSUE OF "DIVIDED FAMILIES" IF THIS WILL SIGNIFICANTLY ADVANCE RELATIONS WITH US. END SUMMARY.

4. UPBEAT NOTE. ZHIVKOV SAID THERE ARE NO REAL PROBLEMS IN U.S.-BULGARIAN RELATIONS. OF COURSE, BULGARIA IS A SOCIALIST NATION, BUT IN THE SPIRIT OF HELSINKI IT SHOULD NOW BE POSSIBLE TO GIVE MAJOR IMPETUS TO THE EXISTING, RATHER SLOW FAVORABLE TREND IN OUR RELATIONS. HE ASKED THAT HIS PERSONAL REGARDS BE CONVEYED TO PRESIDENT FORD, WITH WHOM HE AD ENJOYED HIS SHORT INFORMAL CONVERSATIONS AT HELSINKI, AND TO SECRETARY KISSINGER. WHILE BULGARIA IS A SMALL COUNTRY IT HAS A "BIG HEART AND A BIG (ECONOMIC) POTENTIAL", AND A GOOD BASIS EXISTS FOR COOPERATION BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES.

5. DEPUTY SECRETARY INGERSOLL ACKNOWLEDGED HE HAD BEEN WARMLY RECEIVED; AGREED THAT POTENTIAL EXISTS FOR EXPANDED RELATIONS; AND RECALLED THAT THE SECRETARY HAD TOLD FOREIGN MINISTER MLADENOV AT HELSINKI THAT THERE IS NO REASON WHY OUR RELATIONS SHOULDN'T MOVE FORWARD IF BULGARIA DOESN'T HARASS US IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA AND AS LONG AS IT MAINTAINS PEACEFUL RELATIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBORS.

6. GENERAL ORIENTATION. ZHIVKOV SAID THERE WAS LITTLE HE COULD ADD TO WHAT THE FOREIGN MINISTER HAD TOLD THE DEPUTY SECRETARY. WITH RESPECT TO OUR TRADE LEGISLATION, BULGARIA HAS NO EMIGRATION PROBLEM. "THE OTHER POSSIBLE DEMAND UPON BULGARIA MIGHT BE THAT IT SHOULD GIVE UP SOCIALISM AND COMMUNISM, BUT THAT WE CANNOT DO AND WE DON'T EXPECT YOU TO GIVE UP YOUR SYSTEM EITHER. OUR POSITION IS QUITE SOLID. THERE WON'T BE ANY EARTHQUAKES
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IN BULGARIA, NO SURPRISES ARE TO BE EXPECTED."

7. "SOME PEOPLE SAY," ZHIVKOV CONTINUED, "THAT WE ARE SATELLITES OF THE USSR, BUT THERE ARE ENORMOUS DIFFERENCES BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES". HE THEREUPON ENUMERATED THE DIFFERENCES IN ADMINISTRATIVE MACHINERY AND THE MANAGEMENT OF AGRICULTURE BETWEEN BULGARIA AND THE USSR, STRESSING THAT HIS COUNTRY HAD MADE A LARGE DEPARTURE FROM SOVIET PRACTICE BY ABOLISHING COLLECTIVE FARMS AND SUBSTITUTING "AGRO-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEXES." BULGARIAN FRIENDSHIP WITH THE USSR IS EXPLAINED, HE SAID, BY RUSSIA'S ROLE IN

LIBERATING THE COUNTRY FROM THE TURKS AND LATER FROM "FASCISM". AS HE HAD RECENTLY TOLD THE ASSEMBLED AMBASSADORS, IF HE STARTED TO CRITICIZE THE USSR "I WOULD BE OUSTED, AND I AM NO FOOL." (THE IMPLICATION WAS NOT THAT HE WOULD BE OUSTED BY THE USSR BUT THAT HIS OWN PEOPLE WOULD CONCLUDE THAT HE HAD TAKEN LEAVE OF HIS SENSES.)

8. AS FAR AS RELATIONS WITH THE US WERE CONCERNED, ZHIVKOV CONTINUED, "YOU HAVE DEVELOPED THEM WITH YUGOSLAVIA AND ROMANIA, BUT WITH US YOU SEEM TO HAVE PROBLEMS. YET THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE EXCEPT THE CLASS DIFFERENCE. WE WANT TO DEVELOP RELATIONS. BUT IF YOU DON'T HAVE THE SAME DESIRE WE WILL NOT BE OFFENDED. WE CAN DO OUR BEST, STEP BY STEP. WE HAVE LIVED A LONG TIME WITHOUT THE US, AND I HOPE THE US CAN GET ALONG WITHOUT US." ZHIVKOV THEN BROUGHT UP THE FAMILIAR THEME OF US DISCRIMINATION AGAINST BULGARIAN EXPORTS.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SOFIA 2059

9. THE DEPUTY SECRETARY SAID WITH REGARD TO MFN IT MUST BE UNDERSTOOD THAT WE HAVE A CONGRESS AND THAT ITS VIEWS AFFECT THE ATTITUDES AND OPERATIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT. AT THE PRESENT TIME THERE WERE OPPOSITE VIEWS BETWEEN THE ADMINISTRATION AND CONGRESS WITH REGARD TO TRADE WITH THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES. RECENTLY MEMBERS OF U.S. CONGRESS VISITED MOSCOW AND THOUGH WE CANNOT BE SURE WHAT EFFECT THOSE DISCUSSIONS MAY HAVE, FLEXIBILITY WILL BE NEEDED BOTH FROM THE CONGRESSMEN AND FROM THE SOVIET SIDE. WITH RESPECT TO BULGARIA, ONE WAY TO HAVE A FAVORABLE EFFECT ON THE SITUATION WAS TO REMOVE IRRITANTS SUCH AS THE DIVIDED FAMILIES ISSUE AND OCCASIONAL EXCESSIVELY CRITICAL TREATMENT OF THE US IN THE PRESS. ANOTHER WAY TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WAS TO EXPAND MUTUAL CONTACTS AS

ENVISAGED BY THE FINAL ACT OF CSCE. THE US HAS TAKEN A STEP FORWARD BY TABLING A DRAFT AGREEMENT ON CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION. A LOOSENING OF RESTRICTIONS ON PRINTED MATERIALS (BOOKS, MAGAZINES, NEWSPAPERS) WOULD ALSO CONTRIBUTE TO IMPROVING RELATIONS. THE DEPUTY SECRETARY SAID "WE HAVE NO INTEREST IN CHANGING YOUR SYSTEM AND (WE ACKNOWLEDGE THAT YOU SAY) YOU HAVE NO INTEREST IN CHANGING OURS", AND IF EACH SIDE RESPECTS THE OTHER'S ESSENTIAL INTERESTS WE COULD PURSUE EFFORTS TO EXPAND RELATIONS.

10. PRESS TREATMENT OF US. ZHIVKOV SAID ON THE MATTER
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OF PRESS AND OTHER MASS MEDIA "WE CAN AGREE EVEN NOW."
IF THERE WERE ANY THINGS THAT HAD APPEARED WHICH CONTRADICT THE IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONS "WE WILL ELIMINATE THEM OR REDUCE THEM TO A MINIMUM, OR MODIFY THEM". HOWEVER, HE ADDED, "WE WILL NOT GIVE UP OUR IDEAS (IDEOLOGY) NO MATTER HOW MANY DOLLARS YOU MIGHT GIVE US." (DEPUTY SECRETARY REMARKED HE WAS NOT AWARE ANYONE HAD OFFERED BULGARIA ANY DOLLARS.)

11. PUERTO RICO. WITH RESPECT TO THIS ISSUE, ZHIVKOV SAID, HE UNDERSTOOD THAT HIS PEOPLE HAD GIVEN EXPLANATIONS (PRESUMABLY, OF THEIR VOTE). "WE WILL GIVE THEM INSTRUCTIONS THAT WHENEVER THEY CANNOT ABSTAIN THEY SHOULD AT LEAST KEEP QUIET."

12. DIVIDED FAMILIES. "AS FAR AS I UNDERSTAND THIS INVOLVES LESS THAN 100 INDIVIDUALS, LESS THAN A PLANELOAD. WE COULD AGREE ON YOU SENDING AN AIRPLANE (FOR THEM) RIGHT NOW." (COMMENT: THIS SHOULD BE READ IN CONTEXT OF ZHIVKOV'S STATEMENT TO SECRETARY DENT LAST YEAR THAT HE "COULD" ALLOW ALL SUCH PERSONS TO LEAVE IMMEDIATELY, WHICH WAS NOT FOLLOWED BY ANY SUCH ACTION, PERHAPS BECAUSE HE WAS DISAPPOINTED IN RESULTS OF THE POPOV MISSION TO WASHINGTON. IN ANY CASE, ZHIVKOV'S STATEMENT SHOULD BE FOLLOWED UP WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER, WHO WAS PRESENT DURING THE CONVERSATION, AND WE SHOULD TAKE THE POSITION THAT IT INDICATED A WILLINGNESS TO WIPE THIS MINOR ISSUE OFF THE BOOKS, A WILLINGNESS THAT SHOULD NOW BE TRANSLATED INTO ACTION.)

13. U.S. COVERT ACTIVITIES. ZHIVKOV MADE AN OBSCURE REMARK ABOUT "BULGARIANS IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF EUROPE BEING PREPARED TO COME TO BULGARIA IN THE FUTURE." HE SAID "SOME SERVICES OF THE U.S. ARE INSTRUCTING PEOPLE. SO THERE WILL ALWAYS BE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN US." (THIS MAY HAVE BEEN REFERENCE TO EMIGRE GROUPS SUPPORTED BY AN AGENCY OF THE US GOVERNMENT. HAVING MADE THIS REMARK, ZHIVKOV QUICKLY FOLLOWED WITH A

JOCULAR DIGRESSION ABOUT "ANGELS AND DEVILS", OBVIOUSLY
NOT WISHING TO PURSUE THE SUBJECT.)

14. BALANCE OF THE CONVERSATION WAS DEVOTED TO
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DISCUSSION OF THE BULGARIAN CONCEPT OF AGRO-INDUSTRIAL
COMPLEXES. ON THE ONE HAND ZHIVKOV WAS PROUD THAT IN
THIS RESPECT BULGARIA MAY BE LEADING THE WAY INTO A FUTURE
OF LARGER, COMPUTER-MANAGED AGRICULTURAL UNITS WITH THEIR
INTEGRAL AGRICULTURE-RELATED INDUSTRIES; ON THE OTHER,
HE SAID HE HAD TO BE CAREFUL SO AS NOT TO BE ACCUSED OF
GOING AGAINST ANY BASIC CONCEPTS OF MARXISM (I.E.,
DEPARTING TOO MUCH FROM THE SOVIET PATTERN). IN THIS
CONVERSATION HE DISPLAYED GREAT EAGERNESS FOR INPUTS OF
AMERICAN TECHNOLOGY IN AGRICULTURE, FOOD PROCESSING AND
MANAGEMENT OF LARGE UNITS. HE THOUGHT THE USSR WOULD BE
ABLE TO PROVIDE THIS EVENTUALLY BUT THE US COULD PROVIDE
IT NOW, WHICH WOULD BE GOOD BUSINESS. HE SAID IN EFFECT
ALL FARMLAND IN BULGARIA WAS NOW CONCENTRATED IN 28
"FARMS". THIS DID NOT IMPLY THAT BULGARIA WAS GIVEN TO
"GIGANTISM", BUT AS A SMALL COUNTRY IT WAS LOOKING FOR
THE MOST EFFICIENT WAY OF UTILIZING ITS RESOURCES. IF
AMERICA WISHED, IT COULD PLAY A MAJOR ROLE IN THIS
ENTERPRISE.

15. THE DEPUTY SECRETARY REMARKED IN CLOSING THAT HE
WOULD BE INTERESTED TO COME AGAIN TO BULGARIA TO SEE THE
RESULTS OF THE NEXT FIVE-YEAR PLAN. DISPLAYING NO DOUBT
WHATEVER THAT HE WOULD STILL BE IN POWER IN 1980,
ZHIVKOV EXTENDED AN INVITATION TO MR. INGERSOLL TO COME
THEN IN ANY CAPACITY, PREFERABLY "ON A PRIVATE VISIT
WHEN NO AMBASSADOR WILL BE TAKING NOTES OF OUR CONVERSATION."
HERZ

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